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For the Report to the DCI.

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FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE

Of Special Interest This Week

+ PANAMA - In the wake of the U.S. indictment of Panamanian strongman Manual Noriega on drug charges, "mid-level" officers within the Panamanian Defense Forces (PDF) and General Noriega himself have called for the expulsion of the U.S. Southern Command from Panama on the grounds that its mission goes beyond that of defending the Panama Canal, as set forth in the Torrijos-Carter Canal Treaties. In several items run by the FBIS Wire Service, Southcom's telecommunications responsibilities have been raised as examples of the types of activities carried out by this U.S. military command in violation of its sole duty to defend the canal. Mentioned in this regard by AFP on 12 February is the "telecommunication base" located at Chiva Chiva, the site of the FBIS Panama Bureau. The bureau was not mentioned by name or further identified.

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As part of its contingency planning for the possible loss of the FBIS Panama Bureau, FBIS has gained permission from the U.S. ambassador in Costa Rica to establish a remote operation in the embassy in San Jose which would allow coverage of Costa Rican and perhaps Panamanian broadcast media. The ambassador also authorized a survey in northern Costa Rica to determine the audibility of Nicaraguan media.

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SUBJECT: Notes for the DCI

FBIS-0021-88

C/E&PS/FBIS (17Feb88)

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